

Mission and Organizational Structure

Mission. The U.S. Department of Education's (the Department's) mission is *to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access*.

History. The federal government recognized that furthering education was a national priority in 1867, creating a federal education agency to collect and report statistical data. The Department was established as a cabinet-level agency in 1979. For a chronology of education legislation, go to: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010013_4.pdf.

Our Public Benefit. The Department is committed to ensuring students develop the skills they need to succeed in school, college, and the workforce, while recognizing the primary role of states and school districts in providing a high-quality education, employing highly qualified teachers and administrators, and establishing challenging content and achievement standards. The Department is also setting high expectations for its own employees and working to improve management practices, ensure fiscal integrity, and develop a culture of high performance. For performance and budget overviews, go to: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/performance.html>.

Our Organization. Education is the smallest Cabinet-level federal agency. The Required Supplementary Stewardship Information section of this report contains a summary statement of offices within the Department. For an interactive organizational chart, go to: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/or/index.html>.

What We Do. The Department engages in five major types of activities: establishing policies related to federal education funding; administering distribution of funds and monitoring their use; providing oversight on data collection and research on America's schools; identifying major issues in education and focusing national attention on them; and enforcing federal laws prohibiting discrimination in programs that receive federal funds. For details, go to: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/what-we-do.html>.

Who We Serve. During school year (SY) 2010–11, America's schools and colleges are serving larger numbers of students as the population increases and enrollment rates rise. As SY 2010–11 gets underway, nearly 49.4 million students attend public elementary and secondary schools. Of these, 34.7 million are in pre-kindergarten through 8th grade and 14.7 million are in grades 9 through 12. An additional 5.8 million students attend private schools.

Expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools will be about \$540 billion for SY 2010–11, excluding capital and interest. The national average current expenditure per student is projected for SY 2010–11 at \$10,792, up from \$10,297 in actual expenditures in SY 2007–08.

In fall 2010, a record 19.1 million students are expected to attend the nation's 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities, an increase of about 3.8 million since fall 2000.

For back-to-school statistics and the sources, please see <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372>.